The

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Notes of the Month.

While the present War is responsible for the creation of many new problems, some of them of the utmost importance, it also promises to bring appreciably nearer the solution of some problems of long standing. Consider, for example, the problem of intemperance. Both at home and abroad the advocates of prohibition seemed but a few months ago an almost negligible group of well-meaning and idealistic persons. How great was the change, however, when first Russia and then France took drastic steps to cope with a source of national weakness. The excessive use of vodka in Russia, the cause of widespread misery, and the fatal obstacle to the would-be social reformer, was immediately checked and counteracted by the action of the Tsar, with the result that a transformation has taken place throughout the Russian Empire. It is not too much to say that the whole world has been profoundly impressed by the social consequences of this act of statesmanship. But in more recent times it has been borne in upon our minds that the same evil, if in less extreme form, had to be faced, and if possible eradicated, at home. When we were informed that intemperance was seriously retarding our national endeavours at a time when such was most dangerous to our cause, the problem of Temperance reform seemed real and urgent to many who hitherto had manifested little interest therein. That being so, it was no ordinary, everyday issue which prompted Belfast business men to drop other differences and meet together last month in the Ulster Hall, and proclaim themselves favourable to complete prohibition so long as the War lasts. Their action not only emphasised the gravity of the situation, but also indicated that in times of national crisis many things are seen in a clearer perspective. We are aware that at the time of writing the Government has this matter under consideration, and will doubtless have far-reaching proposals to make. But quite apart from any legislative enactments, we feel that as members of a Christian Church, there is something for us to do. That may imply one of two things: (1) personal example, (2) collective action. With regard to the first, a splendid lead has been given by the King, and already his action has had far-reaching influence. But those who consider that nothing short of prohibition will cope with the situation, should endeavour collectively to make their position plain, and give such a movement every possible support.

Our Annual Sunday School Conference seems to make a wider appeal each year, and has become firmly established as the most attractive and eagerly-anticipated event. It is not likely to fail in interest on this occasion, as we know our Dromore friends can be trusted to do all in their power to ensure a successful gathering on Saturday, June 5th. But, in addition to an attractive centre and kindly hosts, there will be forthcoming another feature of uncommon interest. Dr. Valentine, the newly-appointed Professor of Education at Queen's University, Belfast, has kindly consented to be responsible for the intellectual part of the proceedings. As an educational expert, and one who has devoted special attention to the child mind and character, he will have something to say which should be helpful, not alone to teachers, but to all persons who love the children. Let us give him a hearty welcome and a record audience, and thereby show our appreciation of his kindness.

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On Sunday, May 30th, one of the most interesting and important events in the history of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland will be commemorated. On that day, at 7 p.m., a special service will be held in Ballycarry to remind us of the founding of our congregation there in 1613. It is now over three hundred years since the first Presbyterian Congregation in Ireland was established in Ballycarry, or Broadisland, as it was then called. Many changes, religious and otherwise, have taken place in the world since then, and it is remarkable to find that the Congregation of Ballycarry has, for the three centuries of its existence, remained true to the principles under which it was inaugurated. At its inception it was Non-Subscribing to the Creeds of the Established Church. Since then it has remained Non-Subscribing to them, as well as to the Creed, which so many Irish Presbyterians embraced when they adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1829. The tercentenary service will celebrate the faithful adherence of the people of Ballycarry to the teaching of Christ Himself, rather than to that of Paul, or Calvin, or any other who came after the Master. Political considerations, vagaries of fashion in religion, and ecclesiastical ambition have led many congregations to place more stress upon the doctrines of men than upon the words of Jesus, but the Congregation of Ballycarry has not been one of these. From its birth until now it has steadfastly affirmed that Christianity is mainly concerned with the fulfilment of those duties towards God and man which Christ inculcated, and that His commands as to the practice of morality and righteousness of life must rank before doctrine and dogma.

On such an important occasion as the tercentenary of Ballycarry every member of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church who can attend the special service should do so. The unique occasion will bring together a large concourse, not only of Non-Subscribing Presbyterians, but of members of other denominations. The Rev. J. A. Kelly, of Dunmurry, will preach. The Revs. Alfred Turner, of Templepatrick, and W. G. Marsden, *pastor loci*, will take part in the service; and special musical talent will be secured.

Quite a number of our congregations will be celebrating their tercentenaries within the next ten years, and the service at Ballycarry, being the first of the series, is sure to attract widespread interest.

* *

It is interesting to note that the Rev. H. J. Rossington's pamphlet on "The Atonement and Modern Thought" is of sufficient importance to have found a place in the National Library of Wales.

RELIGIOUS CONTRIBUTIONS.

By Rev. Eustace Thompson.

Luke xxi. 1—"*Casting their gifts into the treasury.*"

THE treasury referred to was one of several. They were a kind of collecting box placed in the temple to receive the offerings for various religious purposes. We commonly designate the money taken up in our churches for such purposes "collections." "Offertory" is

a far better term, because it represents the nature of the worshipper's contribution when he yields it in a proper frame of mind. It is not a tax, but a gift—a free-will offering. It should be a sacrifice—something that has cost something to the giver. David would not offer unto the Lord his God that which had cost him nothing. If one receives a useful present from his neighbour, will he not be the more gratified, as being honoured by his neighbour, in proportion as the gift was unexpected? But will he retain much feeling of gratitude if he learn that his neighbour bestowed the article upon him as being one of so many of the same kind in his possession that he had no use for it? So if we offer unto God only that which we shall not miss, what thanks have we?

But what shall we say of that mean and contemptible person who, coming to his place of worship, brings no offering at all, and is glad to see the large gifts of the few that are generous because they seem to assure him that a contribution of his own is not needed? —who will labour six days in the week and on the Sabbath as well, laying up treasure for himself on earth, yet being not rich toward God?

Real worship is inseparable from sacrifice in these days as truly as ever. And the reason why so little of the worship of to-day deserves the epithet of "real" is that the worshippers accompany it with so little sacrifice. Many who are at a loss to know what profit they shall have if they worship God would soon find out if they presented themselves a living sacrifice, giving with liberality. For, although we speak of "offerings," as he that loseth his life shall find it, so he that giveth receiveth; and the virtue of the poor widow who cast in the two mites, which were all that she had, did but consist in the best kind of wisdom like that of the wise merchant in the parable, who, finding the one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

"All worldly joys go less
To the one joy of doing kindnesses."
Herbert.

COMBER.

Resignation of Rev. Thomas Dunkerley, B.A.

Fine Appreciation of his Ministry.

The Annual Meeting of the Comber Non-Subscribing Congregation was held on the evening of the 13th ult. There was a large attendance. After tea, the chair was taken by the Minister. The Congregational Reports and Statements, which were both of a most satisfactory character, were read, and adopted. Thanks were given to the Sunday School Teachers and to the Organist and Choir. Then, on the motion of Mr. J. M. Andrews, and seconded by Mr. H. D. Todd, the following resolution was carried by acclamation:—

> "That we desire very sincerely to thank our esteemed Minister, Rev. Thomas Dunkerley, B.A., for his valuable work amongst us during the past year."

In reply, Mr. Dunkerley said that this was the thirty-fifth occasion on which he had received their resolution of thanks, yet the observance had not grown stale by repetition, but had been helpful in giving confidence and enabling him to bring out whatever good was in him for their service. It was the knowledge of their approval of his work that had kept him so long in their service, and he was grateful for this resolution and for their many other kindnesses which had accumulated with the growing years.

It was intimated in the Report that a change was impending. "You know well that all connections on earth, even the closest and most loving, are liable to change, liable to come to an end. And we must recognise that this connection of ours can be no exception. It is a satisfaction and a joy to me to learn that up to this time it has not been unprofitable.

"In these recent months, however, I have received reminders that my physical powers are waning, and that I may not continue to be as useful as you must desire your minister to be, nor as useful as my own conscience demands of me. These monitions, then, and this misgiving, warn me that it is advisable to effect a separation,

lest delay should check the congregation's prosperity. And after more than forty years in clerical harness, with all its exactions on mind and spirit, I feel that I have earned the right to retire from active duty without incurring the charge of unfaithfulness.

"I am keenly aware that there is splendid work which needs to be done—work with this congregation and work with our Non-Subscribing Church, whose call I cannot but feel. But I recognise with profound regret and sorrow that that appealing work is not for me. I am like the aged warrior-knight of olden time who brings the sword he has wielded so well and so long, but which he owns with grief, he can wield effectually no longer, and mournfully lays it on the altar. So with me; the time is at hand when, with sadness deeper than I can put into words, I must give up my life-work, which has, on the whole, and owing to your consideration, been to me so joyous. The time has come to make way for a younger and stronger man, for an abler and a better minister. I fervently hope and trust that you will speedily find such minister to lead you in ways of righteousness."

Leaving at this point the chair, to which Mr. J. M. Andrews was appointed, the new chairman read the following message from the Right Hon. Thomas Andrews, D.L., the Treasurer of the Congregation :—

"I am sorry that I do not feel quite able to attend the Annual Meeting of the Congregation to-night, more especially as I am aware that business of exceptional importance will be discussed. I have looked over our accounts, and I am glad to say that they are at least as satisfactory as in recent years. I regret extremely to hear that our most worthy minister, Mr. Dunkerley, intends to take the opportunity of resigning his position as our clergyman. During the past thirty-five years he has acted as our 'guide, philosopher, and friend,' and it is not, therefore, to be wondered at that he now seeks some rest near his talented son, whose young wife so soon found for herself a warm place in the hearts of the members of our congregation who have had the pleasure of meeting her.

It is now thirty-five years since I met Mr. Dunkerley in Manchester, and asked him to come and see Comber and its people, and allow them to make his acquaintance. We made the most ample enquiries about Mr. Dunkerley from those who knew him best, including the great Dr. Martineau, who spoke in the highest and most complimentary terms of him, and in a short time the union was completed, which has proved so lasting and beneficent, not alone to our own congregation, but to the inhabitants of Comber generally, who all speak and feel as affectionately of our minister as we do ourselves. He has been a friend to all, and other Churches invariably found him a broad-minded, generous gentleman, who was always ready to hold out a helping hand, independent of creed or party, and who worked in perfect harmony with those who differed from him in public matters.

"Mrs. Dunkerley, too, was always anxious to do her part as the minister's wife, and she was always highly appreciated and respected by all our people. We trust that Mr. Dunkerley will have many happy years to enjoy his well-earned rest, and that he will often re-visit Comber and renew his acquaintance with his old friends, who will ever hold him in fond remembrance."

At this point Mr. Dunkerley retired from the meeting, while a most friendly conference of the Church members took place. When he was asked to return, the Chairman read to him the following resolution, which had been proposed by Mr. Alexander Orr in a most able and kind speech, and seconded by Mr. Montgomery, and unanimously passed :

> "That we, the members of the Unitarian Congregation, having heard with deepest regret of the decision of the Rev. Thomas Dunkerley, B.A., to retire from the active duties of Minister of our Congregation, desire to place on record our appreciation of his valued and faithful services for upwards of 35 years. During this period the friendly relations which have ever existed between him and ourselves have ripened and deepened into feelings of admiration and affection. It is our wish that he may accept the position of Honorary Senior Minister, and we sincerely hope that he and Mrs.

Dunkerley may enjoy many years of health and happiness in their new home. We further instruct our Committee to take all such steps as they may deem necessary with a view to the appointment of an Assistant and Successor."

Mr. Dunkerley then thanked the meeting for its kind and generous resolution, and said that he accepted the position they offered with all his heart.

A musical programme of very interesting items was then rendered most efficiently, the following taking part :— Mrs. Hugh Ferguson, Mrs. R. Ferguson, Miss E. Ferguson, Miss Creaney, Mr. James Barnes, and Rev. M. Watkins, and Miss M'Bain gave two lively recitations.

[We understand that during Mr. Dunkerley's absence the meeting also decided unanimously to recognise his long and faithful ministry and their affection for him in some further and more substantial form.—ED. *N.-S. P.*].

ULSTER UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

ANNUAL MEETING IN BELFAST.

GRATIFYING YEAR'S PROGRESS.

THE Annual Meeting in connection with the Ulster Unitarian Christian Association was held in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, on Monday evening, 12th April. Mr. W. H. Niall Nelson occupied the chair, and amongst those present were—Revs. Alexander Gordon, M.A. ; J. A. Kelly, G. J. Slipper, G. L. Phelps, G. V. Crook, F. Woolley, E. H. Pickering ; Messrs. Gawin Orr, M.D. ; James Davidson, C. J. M'Kisack, Robert M'Giffin, William M'Ninch, H. B. Hunter, Robert Dickson, Henry M'Gowan, J. R. Erskine, Walter Roberts, Thomas Roberts, Eustace Gordon, Harold Thomas, Samuel M'Crum, Robert M'Crum. At the outset, tea was provided for a large company, the tables being presided over by Mrs. Kelly and Miss Younger.

Rev. G. V. Crook conducted the opening devotional exercises, after which Rev. G. J. Slipper presented the Annual Report, which stated that circumstances had militated against the promotion of a forward movement, not the least of these being the political situation in the earlier part of the year under review, and then the outbreak of war in which the nation was engaged. It was the Committee's intention and desire to keep in view the need of such effort, and the suggestions and help of subscribers and friends would be cordially and gratefully welcomed. The good work carried on by Mr. Eustace Gordon in the Depository had been well maintained, and the inquiries for tracts and literature had been as numerous as in previous years. In the course of the report thanks were returned to the collectors and local treasurers, and regret was expressed at the death of several staunch friends of the Association, including Mr. John Rogers, one of the founders ; Miss Carruthers, Mr. John Smyth, M.A. (Banbridge) ; Mrs. Flannery (Holywood), and Miss Atkinson (Larne). In conclusion, it was stated that the Committee, while conscious of the meagre record of service they had to place before the subscribers, were alive to the needs which the Association was founded to meet, and with a renewal of opportunity they looked forward hopefully to the furtherance of the principles of their faith, founded as they were upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Mr. C. J. M'Kisack presented the statement of accounts, which was of a satisfactory nature.

The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the report and statement of accounts, said they were both of a satisfactory nature, but, although they had a balance at the bank, they wanted more money. Thanks to the energy of Mr. Eustace Gordon, the Depository was in a flourishing condition ; but he was afraid that the demands for religious literature were not as great as they used to be. In these days of hurry and stress the man in the street would not take time to study theological works, and they therefore must look to the missionary side of the Society's efforts for encouragement. They wanted to make themselves known to the outside world, because it was

really wonderful how little the outside world knew of the Unitarians and their beliefs. They were generally misunderstood, and it was their duty to try and remedy that state of affairs if they possibly could. The political state of unrest in the earlier part of the year and that terrible war militated against the furtherance of their objects, but they hoped in the future to be able to press forward with their work.

Rev. G. L. Phelps, who seconded the motion, said it they really felt that the message of their Church, which that Society existed to further, was a message they ought to spread, although that great international crisis must interfere with some of their plans, they had to do their duty. There was a need for a renewed Christianity and a return to first principles. They felt that that war had to be carried through without any compromise being made, but when the end came, and satisfactory terms were arranged, there must be a revivified Christianity in the land, and therein lay their duty.

The motion was passed unanimously.

Mr. James Davidson moved a vote of thanks to Rev. J. A. Kelly for his able and impressive sermon on behalf of the Association, preached at the First House on the previous day.

Mr. H. B. Hunter seconded the motion, which was adopted.

Rev. J. A. Kelly, in acknowledging the resolution, said the Association was first of all a Christian one, and whatever else they did they ought strongly to emphasise that aspect of their faith. It seemed to him that the time had come when they must reach out their hands to those still in darkness. They had a mission in the world, and they could accomplish that mission, not because of human organisation, but because of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Committee and Officers of the Association were elected as follows :—Committee—Rev. James Kennedy, Mr. James Davidson, Mr. Robert M'Giffin, Mr. William M'Ninch, Mr. James M'Williams, Dr. Gawin Orr, Mr. Walter Roberts, Mr. Fred H. Rogers, Rev. H. J. Rossington, Mr. Alex. Spence, Mr. Harold Thomas, Rev. M. Watkins. Treasurer—Mr. Charles J. M'Kisack ; Secretaries—Rev. J A. Kelly and Rev. George J. Slipper.

Rev. Alexander Gordon, M.A., moved the following resolution :—" That this meeting renews its adhesion to the principles and objects of the Associations as set forth in the rules." In the course of his remarks he spoke of the pleasure it afforded him of seeing a young man in the chair at the Annual Meeting of that Association, and said that nothing more striking or gratifying had arisen out of the present crisis than the part played by the young men. They were devoting their time to training for a cause of something even more than country—for the cause of principle, the cause of the safety of the weaker nations, and the cause of international prosperity and progress. Their young men had discerned the need and the signs of the times, and the power which the old men had lost they were putting forth. They in that Association were engaged in a contest against ignorance, prejudice, and irreligion, or anything that militated against truth and the spread of the religion of Jesus Christ. They were a comparatively small body, but it was their duty to see that the broad principles of thought which had been their inheritance were as widely disseminated as possible. It was for the young men amongst them to carry on the good work which their fathers and grandfathers and more distant ancestors had devoted themselves to with signal force and fervour.

Mr. Harold Thomas seconded the motion, which was adopted.

On the motion of Rev. E. H. Pickering, seconded by Mr. Eustace Gordon, a vote of thanks was extended to the Chairman, and the proceedings terminated with the benediction.

"Except wind stand as never it stood,
It is an ill wind turns none to good."
—*Tusser.*

"What you keep by you, you may change and mend,
But words once spoke can never be recalled.'

THE SILVER BULLET.

(Dedicated to Mr. Lloyd George and with apologies to the late Lord Tennyson).

Property! property! property!
Yes that's what the times do say;
Spend as little as ever you can
An' so give the more away.
For them as cannot fight, sir
It's them as has got to pay.

Property! property! property!
Our lads is havin' a scrap
Blazin' away at them Germans, and
I'll give 'em my lastest rap.
The sword's all right, no doubt, sir,
But so is the purse, mayhap.

Property! property! property!
They're gettin' some nasty knocks;
The *women* at home are all knitting
Things, some of 'em say, is socks.
I rub up my pass-book, sir,
An' cudgel my shares an' stocks.

Property! property! property!
Money I likes to rattle;
But take it Tommy, an' take it Jack,
'Twill help to end the battle.
I'll give them all I can, sir,
S'long as I've sheep or cattle.

A. M'I. CLELAND.

Knock, Belfast.

OBITUARY.

REV. C. H. OSLER.

On Easter Tuesday, April 6th, there passed away at Southport, after a long illness, the Rev. Charles Henry Osler, Vicar of Warley, near Halifax. Mr. Osler was in his 64th year, and the news of his death will be received with deep regret in the North of Ireland, where he was well known to the older generation as the respected minister of our congregation in Banbridge. Mr. Osler's youthful connections were with the Church of England, but in early manhood he became dissatisfied with the teaching of the National Church, and came over to Unitarianism. With the zeal that usually characterises the convert, he desired to pass on to others the ideas that now found acceptance in his own mind. He sought entrance to, and was admitted, as a student of our College in Manchester. After his course of study, he ministered in succession to three of our congregations—Darwen, Upperthorpe, and Banbridge. His work at the last place was most successful, but his stay was unfortunately short. He was installed in 1886, and in 1890 his mind having turned again to the teaching imbibed in youth, he resigned his charge, being shortly afterwards received back into the Church of England. Mr. Osler was an indefatigable worker. He was greatly interested in the young, and in Sunday School, Temperance Society, Singing Class, and other institutions did what he could for their welfare. He was gifted with great fluency and eloquence, and his pulpit services were much appreciated both by the members of the congregation and others who came in large numbers to the doctrinal lectures which he was fond of delivering. He magnified his office as a Christian minister, and tried to induce the young men of his flock to recognise its opportunities and to enter its ranks. He was always ready to place his help in the preparatory studies at the disposal of students, and at least two youths of the Banbridge congregation, who chose the ministry as their calling, owe their initial training to his labours. As his days were fully occupied, he found the time for this unselfish and exacting work by rising in the mornings at an hour when most others were enjoying their sleep. It was a great disappointment to his Unitarian friends when he went out from amongst us. It is pleasing, however, to know that his work at Banbridge still bears fruit in the lives of numbers whom he helped, and that that work was continued and greatly appreciated in other surroundings until health failed. We offer our sincere sympathy to his widow, daughter, and son.

MR. JOSEPH M'CULLOUGH, Newry.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Joseph M'Cullough, of Crowhill, Newry, which occurred recently. For

some months he had been in indifferent health, but his decease was quite unexpected. He was in his 70th year, and had been a faithful member of the Newry Congregation throughout his life-time.

The last surviving son of a family connected with the Newry Church for many generations, he took a warm interest in its progress, and served in the capacity of a Trustee and member of Committee. His attendances at the services were very regular, and he will be greatly missed.

He is survived by two sisters, Mrs. James M'Cullough and Mrs. Smith, to both of whom much sympathy is extended. The funeral was attended by a large company of friends, and the services in the home and at the graveside were conducted by the Rev. G. J. Slipper.

MR. HAMILTON M'ALPINE,
Newry.

The death of this old and devoted member of the Newry Congregation took place on March 29th very suddenly. Mr. M'Alpine was in his 80th year, and, until compelled by age about a year ago to discontinue the long walk from his home, was most regular in his attendance at service. Though not occupying any office in the Church, his interest in its affairs was very warm. He was a devoted husband and father, and a good friend, and the sorrow evinced at his parting was testified by the numerous company of friends who attended his funeral.

The Rev. G. J. Slipper, his pastor and friend, officiated at the services in the home and at the graveside.

ANN'S BOY.

By Ruth Duffin.
(By Permission of C. A. Pearson, Ltd.)

— — —

"Ach, the crathur! How will she get along at all, now poor Mary's gone?" said Mrs. Cregan, as she stood in her doorway, her baby in her arms.

"'Deed you may ask that!" replied old Mrs. Maguire, as she watched Ann Malone making her way up the village street—a tall, ungainly figure bowed against the rainy wind. "But she'll not be long in it herself; she's quarely failed this year past, Mrs. Cregan, an' they do say wan death in a family is apt to bring two with it in a year's time."

"Well, there'll be no more than the wan this time, for her an' Mary was the last of all their kin. I declare to you, Mrs. Maguire, I do be heart-sorry for women that has no childher about them," said Mrs. Cregan, with a glance at the baby sleeping snugly on her arm.

"Aye, it's lonesome when ye be gettin' near the end, an' ne'er a wan to care," said Mrs. Maguire. "An' forbye, Ann was always great on childher, the crathur, Heaven pity her! An' faith she might have had them of her own, only for her sendin' Johnnie Hayes away to his death in America, an' him fair wild to get her."

"An' why wouldn't she have him? Sure he had enough?"

"O ay, but it was after her old mother dyin', an' there was nobody only herself left till do for Mary, an' she wouldn't lave her, an' her as helpless as a child, an' no more sense than a chicken, ye might say, God help her!"

"Well, now, an' wasn't it a strange thing a man to want to part them?"

"Sure an' couldn't Mary have lived with them, an' no harm in her at all?"

"Ay, ye might say, but he wanted Mary put away in the asylum, an' then Ann she just tould him he might be off out o' that with himself. An' she cried the two eyes out of her head when he went. No better than a ghost she was for long after."

"Some men bees the queer, black-hearted things," said Mrs. Cregan, indignantly.

"Och, well, now, there's all sorts, good an' bad, just the same as other things!" said Mrs. Maguire, with more philosophy. "Me own bees contrary sometimes when he has drink taken but I'd rather him than noan."

* *

Meanwhile poor Ann Malone was plodding wearily homewards to the solitary cottage which stood by the roadside, with the brown bog stretching

behind it to the foot of the purple mountains. Lonely it had always been, but it was doubly lonely since the day before, when Mary, her poor half-witted sister, had been carried to the little graveyard behind the chapel. Ann gave a quivering sigh as she lifted the latch, and was greeted by emptiness and silence and a hearth where the turf fire was smouldering to ashes. She raked it together, and set the teapot to warm among the embers. Then she sat down in the dusk, and her mind went back over the years. Not till she thought how different they might have been did the full tide of her loneliness overwhelm her. Up till to-night she had had but little time for regrets. There had always been the house and the little potato patch to be kept in order, turf to be brought in from the bog, and the hens and the goat to be fed. True, these things still remained, but somehow there seemed no particular hurry about them now. The main-spring of her efforts—poor silly Mary—was gone, and Ann felt as she herself would have expressed it—"lost" without her. After a while she drank her stewed tea, lit her lamp, and sat down to the "sprigging," by which she eked out her living. But work that does not occupy the mind is no panacea for pain and loneliness, and the leaden ache at her heart only grew the heavier as she sat there, her swift needle flashing in and out of the fine cambric. The silence was terrible, and the low, hurried ticking of the cheap little alarm clock on the mantelshelf only seemed to make it more intense

"If I had a cat itself," thought poor Ann. "I'll ask Mrs. Barron will she give me wan of her next lot of kittens." And then with a sudden sick turn of thought, the revulsion of a wearied mind, "Och, an' what use is a cat? If it was a child now," she sighed, "an' the women that has them as like as not lettin' on they're nothin' but a trouble and a heart-scald. Troth I wish I had a heart-scald like them."

She fell to imagining what it would be like to have a child to "do for," planning how she would put it to bed and waken in the night to hear it breathing softly beside her, and how in the morning she would give it its "sup o' milk out o' the wee cup wid the whistlin' robin for a handle," and how it would trot after her when she went to feed her hens. The crowning point of her dream was a vision of herself going through the village, and the neighbours standing at their doors looking with admiring eyes at "Ann's wee boy."

Somehow she never thought of her dream-child as anything but a boy—a boy with black eyes and a dark, curly head, like one that she had known long ago. She cheated her loneliness for some time, and then she roused herself with a start and an absurd feeling of shame.

"An oul' maid like me," she said to herself contemptuously, as she prepared to go to bed. Nevertheless, as she knelt before her little crucifix she prayed the Holy Mother, with childlike simplicity, to send her something to take care of—something for company.

"Sure she could aisy put some lonesome wee child in my way," she thought. "She'd be apt to understand the way I be wishin' for it, an' there's many a wan without e'er a father or mother that maybe she'd be glad to find someone would take it an' be good till it."

From long association with her simple-minded sister, Ann herself had fallen into a curiously childlike habit of thought. Of one thing she was quite certain—nothing was impossible to "Them Above."

* *

One morning a few days later Mrs. Maguire came hurrying into Mrs. Cregan's kitchen as fast as her rheumatic old limbs would let her. Mrs. Cregan was busily engaged in washing some clothes in an old tub.

"Good morning, Mrs. Maguire," she said, wiping her soapy arms. "I hope I see you well."

"Did ye hear about Ann Malone?" said Mrs. Maguire, too much excited to take any notice of the enquiry after her health.

"I did not—ach, don't tell me the crathur's dead!" said Mrs. Cregan.

"Dead, how are ye! Faith it's not dead she is this morning. I'm just

afther meetin' her on the road, an' a wee boy with her."

"A wee boy? Whose wee boy?" Mrs. Cregan felt vaguely that she had been cheated of a sensation, and her voice had an echo of disappointment.

"The natest wee boy iver ye seen," said Mrs. Maguire, "an' a wee green shute on him, an' eyes like a black sloe." Says, I, "whose wee boy's this ye have, Ann?" An' says she, proud like, "He's mine, Mrs. Maguire," says she. "An' he's going to live with me, so he is. Aren't ye, Johnnie?" An' the wee fellow nods his head as wise as an oul' man. Says I, "Where did ye get him at all, Ann?" An' says she, "He was lost all his lone on the bog, an' I brought him home, an' he's my wee boy," says she. "But," says I, "Ann the police 'll be sarchin' for him very belike; don't be settin' your heart on kapin' him," says I (for I seen she was that set up, the crathur, an' her so lonely since Mary wint). "Sure," says I, "it stan's to reason he has folks 'll be lookin' for him."

"An' with that he looks up at Ann with his big wise eyes, an' says he, "Ann's boy," in the weashiest voice iver ye heard.'"

"Did *iver* e," said Mrs. Cregan, now thoroughly interested. "Where are they, till I get seein' him?"

"They're away till the shop," said Mrs. Maguire. "But I'll houl' ye, they'll be comin' back soon."

The two women took up a position in the doorway. The news had spread quickly, and little knots of women and old men had gathered in front of the green half-doors on either side of the wide village street. Mrs. Maguire and Mrs. Cregan were joined by old Dan Casey, who, his hands thrust into the tattered pockets of his old green coat, was smoking a stained clay pipe.

"I'm just after tellin' Mrs. Cregan," said Mrs. Maguire. "Who'll the child be at all, Dan?"

"Och, how would I know?" said Dan, removing his pipe with a trembling hand. "But I'll tell ye," he added, in a mysterious whisper, "He's the very moral of Johnnie Hayes, if ye mind him."

"Och, away!" said Mrs. Maguire, "Sure Johnnie Hayes died in America twenty years back an' more, an', more-betoken, he had nayther wife nor child."

"Aye, he did that," said old Dan, "but I min' him well when he was no bigger than this wan, an' he's as like him as two peas."

"Here they're comin'," said Mrs. Cregan, in an excited whisper. "Let on ye're just talkin' to me, Mrs. Maguire, for she'll be feelin' it strange-like, so many lookin' at her."

Down the street came Ann, her head held rather higher than usual, a red flush on her worn cheeks. By her side ran a little boy with a dark curly head and dancing eyes. He smiled at the people as he passed, his hand slipped confidingly into Ann's. He wore a curious outlandish-looking dark green suit, which fitted his slender little figure as the transparent sheath fits a head of grass.

As they came opposite the Police Barracks, Sergeant Nolan, who was among the gazers, stepped out and stopped them. Ann shrank away, but the little boy looked up at the big police man and smiled. There was a low-voiced colloquy, but all that reached the eager listeners were the sergeant's parting words.

"Well, if any one bees askin' for him, Miss Malone, I'll maybe be steppin' up to pay ye a visit. But let him stay wid ye now in the meantime."

Ann nodded and passed on, but she had to listen to many friendly queries before she was allowed to take her way homewards. To all questions she answered simply:

"Sure I found him all alone in the bog, an' he can tell me nothin' of where he come from, the crathur. He just says 'Ann's boy' when I be askin' him. Sure he's been sent to me to be a comfort in my old age," she said, looking at the child with worshipping eyes.

(*To be Continued.*)

BY THE WAY.

TRUE to my nomadic name, I spent a day or two at Easter with a companion tramping over the Mourne Mountains.

Far away from the busy haunts of men, and far away from the stress and agony of the war, we drew comfort and refreshment as we communed with God in his tenderest and most enticing form. As we rambled over and among Slieve Donard, Slieve Bernagh, Eagle Mountain, the Silent Valley (sweet promise of restfulness !), and the valley of that stream with the dazzling name of Yellow Water River, casting our eyes over the sea from time to time as it revealed itself amid new coastlands and with changing variety of surface and colour, a fresh vigour and a restored hope coursed through us, assuring us that, despite all man's inhumanity to man, God is ever good, and man still the promise of Godlikeness.

* *

It is indeed worth while to walk among the friendly hills and singing vales. To some this may not perhaps seem the pattern of a restful holiday, but that is because they have never tried it. But I assert, without fear of contradiction, that until he has ascended some 2,000 feet or so, no man can properly appreciate the joy of walking, can enter into harmony with the message of nature—no, nor even enjoy eating and drinking as he should.

* *

Oh ! the absolute perfection of that meal taken on the far side of Slieve Donard—a meal consisting of strange new mixtures, in which sweet and sour became intimate associates, owing to the shaking up our knapsacks had suffered, and eaten with fingers tingling with mountain cold and appetite seasoned with the sauce of mountain air !

* *

Two days' good walking brought us about 10 o'clock at night to the friendly manse of a town, situated at the head of Carlingford Lough, the name of which shall appropriately be Sleepy Hollow. There kind and eager friends welcomed us as if we were living beings from strange, unfrequented lands, after whose cheery hospitality we went to bed—to sleep. Then to civilization, but a civilization made more gracious by the memory of Wordsworth's lines :—

"I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth ; but bearing oftentimes
The still sad music of humanity,
Not harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue."

* *

But to become topical and return to thoughts of the present terrible crisis ! A speaker at a meeting the other night in the Central Hall endeavoured to cheer us up by suggesting that many good things might come out of the war. He illustrated his point by a very appropriate story.

* *

At a parliamentary election in an Irish constituency in the good old days, the rival candidates were Messrs. Moore and Stratton. When Mr. Moore drove into the constituency he was greeted by a somewhat disreputable supporter, who declared his intention of voting for him. "But, your honour," he added, "how can I with decency go to the poll in these ?" pointing to his rags. His honour saw the point, and two committee men were told off to get the rascal a suit of clothes. "Now," said Mr. Moore to him, when he returned respectably clad, "Now I suppose you are ready to poll." "Sure, your honour," he replied, "but how can a man go to the poll with a throat as dry as a lime-kiln ?" The necessary was produced, but, after he had drunk his fill, the man lifted up his voice and cried out, "Here's long life for Stratton!" "What," asked Mr. Moore, with heat, "and are you not going to vote for me after all ?" "Sure I am, your honour," the man replied, "but if it had not been for Stratton there would have been no contest, and if there had been no contest I shouldn't have got this fine suit of clothes, to say nothing of the best of spirits I have within me."

* *

The war has certainly put the best of spirits into us, judging by the extraordinary loyalty displayed on every side, and the magnificent response the public is making to the unexampled calls on their charity.

But I am more and more persuaded that not only have we to strain every nerve to bear the palm of victory, but also have to keep continually before us the ideals of humanity in order to turn the victory into a noble and lasting peace. It is our duty to be humane, even when we are afraid that the enemy might judge our humanity to be weakness. A really humane deed is extraordinarily convincing, even to hardened hearts.

The following story is apposite at this point. A certain wealthy lady was driving home in a cab from the station, when, looking through the window, she saw a man running by the side of the cab. Guessing his purpose, she waved him off, telling him that her servants would be able to manage the luggage. But his pale anxious face so affected her that she handed him what she thought was a sixpence. Arriving home, a mile or two distant, she was astonished to find the man breathless, having kept up all the way with the cab, in order to give her back the half-sovereign which he guessed was given him by mistake. The lady was so impressed by his honesty that she refused to receive it back, and then turned to pay the cabman. "Oh, no," said the cabman, "I am not going to take a fare from a lady like you."

VIATOR.

Reports.

Unity Guild.—It is matter for regret that there was not a larger attendance at the Annual Meeting on 14th April, as business of great importance to the Guild was transacted. The New Rules, which have been occupying attention for nearly twelve months, were presented, and, after being discussed and amended, they assumed the form in which they now govern the Guild. The chief change is the introduction of Local Guilds to act as local centres for the Unity Guild. One has already been formed in connection with the First Congregation, and we look to the new President to follow up this lead. The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, which were adopted, show that the Guild is in a very flourishing condition, and has passed through a most successful year. The Committee may feel justly proud of having handed two cheques, which together amounted to £12 12s., to the Belgian Relief Fund, as the outcome of the Annual Soiree, while the entire proceeds of the collection taken up at the Annual Service were given to the National Institute for the Blind. This shows the Guild does not work merely for its own ends, but that considerable generosity is displayed when there are funds to draw upon. It speaks well for the sound finance of the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Geo. J. Hill, that he still has a sufficient balance in hand to enable him to start the new year well. The optimistic note which characterised the Report is quite justified, and it is confidently expected that still further progress will be made under the Rev. E. H. Pickering, the new President. Mr. Eustace Gordon, Mr. G. J. Hill, and Mr. H. B. Hunter were again elected to the offices of Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, and Hon. Auditor respectively. What should prove to be a good, hard-working Committee of twelve were elected by ballot from the 18 names proposed. They will expect loyal support from the members of the Guild in anything they undertake. A fuller summer programme than usual is to be carried out, consisting of 5 excursions—22nd May, Carrickfergus; 12th June, Greyabbey; 3rd July—Antrim—conducted by Mr. Robert Welch; 24th July, Killinchy; 4th September, Giant's Ring. It is hoped that members and friends connected with the various congregations concerned will make special note of these dates, and try to keep them free from other engagements, as nothing is more encouraging to the new Committee than seeing the excursions well attended. The Annual Service is fixed to take place at All Souls' Church, Elmwood Avenue, on Sunday, 23rd May, at 3-30 p.m.

* *

Belfast Domestic Mission.—There was a large attendance at the Annual Congregational Meeting on 24th March. After tea had been served, under the able management of Mrs. Woolley,

assisted by many willing helpers, the chair was taken by Rev. F. Woolley. During the evening Mr. Rea read a Statement of Accounts. He said that the collections taken up during the year ended 28th February amounted to £23 14s. 4d., showing an increase of £9 4s. on the previous year. This is the Mission's own effort to help those who are in trouble and difficulty, and, as Mr. Woolley truly said, it is veritably "a gift to God"; it shows much delicacy on the part of all concerned that no names of recipients of benefit from this fund were mentioned; details of expenditure were grouped in such a way as to show the amounts spent on distributing coal, tickets for groceries, etc. Particular interest attaches to the musical programme, which was presented by the members of the choir—individually and collectively. Items were contributed by the Misses L. Rea, C. Wilson, M. Logan, M. M'Meekin, M. Craig, M. Wilson, and Mr. M'Clatchey. This is the first time that the choir has given a programme entirely unaided, and Mr. Butterworth, the Organist, richly deserved the vote of thanks passed at the close of the meeting. In a short reply, he modestly said they had done their best to give pleasure to those present, and hoped that they would do even better next time. Proceedings closed by singing the National Anthem.

Killinchy.—The annual concert, held under the auspices of the Temperance Guild and the Sunday School, took place on Easter Monday, April 5th. A large attendance gathered to enjoy what proved to be one of the best programmes ever given at this annual concert. The items were largely contributed by our own young people and school children, in addition to Miss Annie Stewart, who, in spite of a cold, sang as sweetly and acceptably as ever, and Mr. Shaw, of Derryboy, whose clear and tuneful voice it was a pleasure to listen to. A temperance address was given by Mr. E. A. Atkinson, of the Irish Temperance League. The audience was keenly interested in the address. A series of three resolutions were carried unanimously, calling on the Government and the War Office to limit the facilities for drinking for the period of the war. During the evening three sketches were performed. The first, a temperance sketch—"Buying a Parrot"—by the Misses Hay, Miss Tiny Finlay, Mr. John Fitchie, Mr. John Finlay, and Mr. J. M'Ilwrath. The Sunday School children also gave a bright little sketch, entitled: "Miss Teazle's Trunk," the artistes being Misses M. M'Cormick, L. Hay, M. M'Cann, and Masters Arnold and Gerwyn Williams. A third sketch was given by Miss and Mr. Robert Orr, rendered in a spirited manner, which the audience much enjoyed. Miss M'Ilwrath sang, and was well received, and Mr. David Orr recited in his usual good style, and Mr. Robert Orr's comic song brought the programme to a close. The proceedings terminated with the singing of "God Save the King."

* *

Larne.—The Annual Meeting of this congregation was held on Friday evening, 26th March, but, owing to bereavements and public calamities, was confined to purely business matters. The Committee's Report was submitted by Mr. Samuel Magill, Secretary, and, as usual, contained matters pleasant and matters painful, the death-roll being unusually heavy. The Treasurer, Mr. David A. Nelson, submitted his statement of Accounts, which was of a very satisfactory character. Committees and Office-bearers having been appointed, the meeting closed—as it began—with singing, Miss Beth M'Ninch accompanying at the piano, and prayer by the minister. On the following Tuesday evening a very pleasant entertainment was given to the Sunday School children, chiefly through the initiation and energy of Miss Bailie, whose efforts were well supported by the other Sabbath School teachers—Miss M'Kee, Miss Beth M'Ninch, Miss Bryans, Miss Bell, Miss Steele, with Mr. Frank Wright and Mr. Thomas Pullin.

* *

Mountpottinger.—On Friday, March 26th, the Choir, aided by a few friends, held a dramatic and musical entertainment in the school-room, the proceeds being in aid of the Choir Funds. There was a large and appreciative audience,

who were entertained to an excellent programme. The junior members of the Choir contributed a character song as the opening item, whilst other contributions were pianoforte duets by Misses Annie Yarr and Eileen Steele, and Miss Morrow and Master Robin Adair. Despite a severe cold, Miss Nellie Allen was heard to advantage in a monologue, entitled: "My Lost Golosh." Songs were contributed by Mr. Irvine and Miss Molyneaux, and a duet by Misses Aggie and Maggie Neill. Mr. Doherty was as great a favourite as usual with his humorous songs, and Messrs. W. Wilson, H. Steel, L. Watters, and E. Mitchell provided much hilarity by their sketch, "Four Niggers." The most important item on the programme was a sketch, entitled: "Under New Management," the characters being most excellently portrayed by Misses A. Neill, H. Smyth, M. Neill, M. Montgomery, E. Malcolm, E. Neill, and Messrs. L. Watters, and W. Wilson. The whole performance reflected great credit on Miss Morrow, L.I.A.M., Church Organist, who had charge of the rehearsals and the whole arrangements. Thanks are due to Miss Magill for loan of piano; Mr. J. Orr for presenting the tickets; and Messrs. J. Malcolm and L. Braithwaite for arranging the lighting.

* *

Rademon.—A patriotic concert was held in the Meeting-house on Wednesday evening, April 14th. The proceeds were on behalf of the Motor Ambulance Fund of the Unitarian Sunday Schools. The young people of the congregation entered into the project with much enthusiasm, and carried out successfully the unpleasant work of selling the tickets. The Rev. J. D. Davies, the popular minister of Clough, who is a past-master in the art of organizing concerts, freely placed his skilled services at our disposal. On his motor bicycle he hunted up his musical friends, and gave them no peace until they consented to help. As a result, a motor car, packed to overflowing, brought along from military camps and seaside town an array of talent which, with the assistance of other friends, enabled us to give what has since been described as "the best concert ever held in the district." Nor was an appreciative audience wanting. The old Meeting-house was comfortably full. The weather was ideal, and everything joined to make the function successful. We expect to be able to send forward to the Ambulance Fund a sum reaching at least to the 'teens of pounds. The following ladies and gentlemen provided the programme, and the minister wishes to take this opportunity of thanking them heartily for their services:—The Misses Annie, Daisy, and Florrie Newman, Miss Smyth, Miss Martin, Miss Liggett, Miss Dadie Bassett, Miss May Bassett, Miss Henesey, Miss Annie Morrison, the Rev. J. D. Davies, the Rev. M. Watkins, Lieutenant Patterson, Lieutenant M'Gusty. This is the third effort made by the people of Rademon for patriotic purposes since the war began. In autumn a sum of £19 5s. was contributed to the Prince of Wales' Fund. At the New Year the Belgians received £1 11s. 0d.

Echo.

How hopeless is the attempt to anticipate the final fixed state of either one's opinions or sentiments How they forever fluctuate to the various influence of changing scenes, social affections, and advancing life If we should live to the age of sixty the radical character of our mind and heart will probably be the same as now, but are not the possible modifications infinite? Here are the German Emperor's opinions and sentiments on his first visit to England after his accession in 1891—"The same blood runs in English and German veins Following the example of my grandfather and my ever-lamented father, I shall always, as far as it is in my power, maintain the historical friendship between these our two nations, which have so often been seen side by side in defence of liberty and justice My aim is, above all, the maintenance of peace"

"Blessed are the happiness makers;
Blessed are they that remove friction;
That make the course of life smooth and
the intercourse of man gentle."

H. W. Beecher.

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